

"Silent Majorities" and the Vietnam War

Is there a majority opinion on American involvement in the war in Vietnam? A study of public-opinion polls indicates that most Americans are against the war but that motivations are mixed

by Philip E. Converse and Howard Schuman

President Nixon has asserted that a "silent majority" supports his stand on the war in Vietnam. His critics respond that a majority of Americans want a quicker end to the war than the President offers. Each side seems able to cite opinion polls that appear to uphold its point of view. One is left wondering whether or not a national majority has in fact been identified and, if it has, what it favors.

At the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan we have recently brought together a decade of the published results of polls on the Vietnam war. We have also subjected data from our own national surveys to a level of detailed analysis that goes well beyond the usual newspaper reports of public opinion. Although it would be reckless to claim that any simple or unequivocal picture emerges from this work, we can say that our findings do not present the kind of patchwork that defies coherent interpretation. At the very least they help to clarify what is accurate, as opposed to what is probably overdrawn, in either extreme of interpretation of the public mood on the war in Vietnam.

One fact is important to recognize at the outset. Although the standard national survey of some 1,500 interviews may seem far too small to represent a nation with an adult population exceeding 190 million, the procedures of the major reputable survey organizations are

geared to mathematical sampling theory and can be expected to provide estimates of overall proportions that are accurate to within a few percentage points. It is true that there are practical problems in applying sampling theory to surveys of human populations, but the problems have to do not with size of sample but with failure to adequately represent all parts of the population. The main loss is unavoidable: some of the people who are selected refuse to be interviewed and others cannot be found during the interviewing period. The proportion missed in this way is often as large as 20 percent and could have serious effects on the results of a poll if such people differed consistently from the rest of the population. Fortunately studies of the characteristics of such "nonrespondents" indicate that omitting them has little effect on the conclusions one would draw about opinion on the Vietnam war. In any event these losses are similar in all surveys of opinion and so cannot serve to explain any seeming difference in the results.

It follows, then, that two national surveys of standard size taken at the same time by competent agencies should show results that differ from each other by no more than a small sampling error. We find this expectation is typically borne out, given one crucial proviso: the questions and the interviewing procedures must be identical or sufficiently similar. The difficulty is that this condi-

tion is met far less frequently than the casual observer might expect.

Where voting behavior is concerned there are not many different ways to assess voter intentions, and election polls can be compared readily. Most matters of public policy are not so easily approached. For the war in Vietnam the controversial aspects are almost innumerable. Each aspect requires a somewhat different question, which has its own unique meaning. Moreover, since polling agencies prefer to word their own questions, it is possible to obtain different results even when two agencies are examining essentially the same aspect of an issue. In the case of the war in Vietnam, for example, it is unusual to find instances where two national surveys were made at the same time with questions worded the same way.

The difficulties that can arise from differing questions are easily demonstrated. In the summer of 1966, for example, 70 percent of the people interviewed by the Gallup poll said they approved the bombing by the U.S. of oil storage dumps in Haiphong and Hanoi, 11 percent disapproved and the remainder had no opinion. Two months later the same organization sampled opinion about the demand of many "doves" that the U.S. submit the Vietnam problem to the United Nations "and agree to accept the decision, whatever it may be." In this case 51 percent of the sample thought the proposal was "a good idea" and only

32 percent disliked it. The reader who considered this result to be three to two in favor of the doves and compared it with the apparent majority of seven to one for the "hawks" a few weeks earlier might have had cause to wonder about the solidity of public opinion or the

soundness of polling procedures. In actuality the confusion lies in too simplistic a view of the results, since the questions were quite different and could not be expected to give commensurate responses.

A more subtle problem is presented when questions identical in purpose dif-

fer markedly in wording or format. In June, 1969, the Gallup poll told respondents that the President had "ordered the withdrawal of 25,000 troops from Vietnam in the next three months" and asked for opinions on whether "troops should be withdrawn at a faster or a

38. How much attention have you been paying to what is going on in Vietnam:

/1.A good deal/ , /3.Some/ , or /5.Not much/ ?

38a. Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Vietnam or should we have stayed out?

/1.Yes, did right thing/ /5.No, should have stayed out/ /8.Don't know/

38b. Which of the following do you think we should do now in Vietnam?
(HAND R CARD #1)

/1.Pull out of Vietnam entirely/

/2.Keep our soldiers in Vietnam but try to end the fighting/

/3.Take a stronger stand even if it means invading North Vietnam/ /8.D.K./

OTHER; DEPENDS: _____

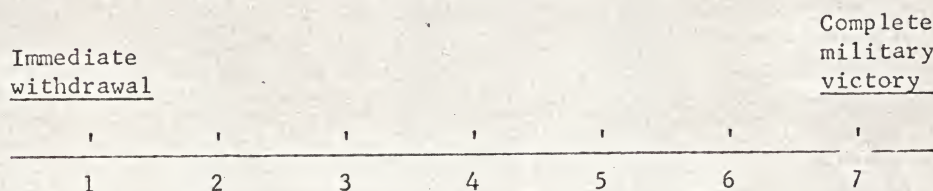
38c. Which party do you think is more likely to take a stronger stand even if it means invading North Vietnam?

/1.Democrats/ /5.Republicans/ /3.No difference/ /8.Don't know/

POLLING FORM used by interviewers for the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan included questions on the war in Vietnam. Under question 38b the interviewer is instructed

to hand the respondent a card; the card enabled the respondent to see the alternatives as the interviewer stated them. The interviewer marked the response in appropriate box below the question.

67. There is much talk about "hawks" and "doves" in connection with Vietnam, and considerable disagreement as to what action the United States should take in Vietnam. Some people think we should do everything necessary to win a complete military victory, no matter what results. Some people think we should withdraw completely from Vietnam right now, no matter what results. And, of course, other people have opinions somewhere between these two extreme positions. Suppose the people who support an immediate withdrawal are at one end of this scale (SHOW CARD #4 TO R) at point number 1. And suppose the people who support a complete military victory are at the other end of the scale at point number 7.



SCALE OF OPINION was presented to respondents by the interviewers for the Survey Research Center and the answer was marked

by the interviewer on the form shown here. The respondent was also asked to place several public officials and himself on the scale.

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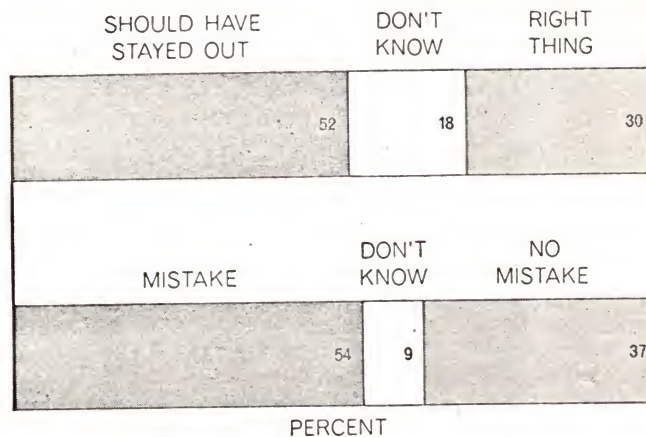
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 asked a similar question but pre-
 sented three choices: "In general, do
 you feel the pace at which the President
 is withdrawing troops is too fast, too
 slow, or about right?" Again the equiv-
 alent of "faster" won over "slower," by
 29 percent to 6 percent, but this time 49
 percent approved the current rate. The
 key to the difference in the two results is
 that the Gallup format made it easier for
 respondents to disagree with the exist-
 ing rate of withdrawal.

Several approaches are open to the ob-
 server who wants to avoid pitfalls of
 interpretation and make sense of ma-
 jority opinion on Vietnam. One is to
 trace changes over a period of time in
 responses to a question, provided that
 the fundamental meaning of the ques-
 tion has not been altered by changes
 in the situation. A second approach is to
 pay strict attention to nuances in the
 wording of a number of questions pre-
 sented at about the same time; in this
 way one can establish the broad bound-
 aries of public opinion on the war in
 Vietnam and can isolate the ways that
 the wording of questions colors res-
 ponses. A third approach is to explore
 differing reactions to the same question
 in various segments of the population.

The broadest trends in American
 opinion on the Vietnam war over the
 past decade appear clearly in all surveys.
 At the beginning of the period the atti-
 tude was one of inattentive tolerance
 toward the U.S. Government's actions in
 South Vietnam. For example, when re-
 spondents in a Survey Research Center
 poll in 1960 were asked to name the
 most important problem facing the coun-
 try, only a tiny number mentioned the
 Vietnam war even indirectly. The war
 received 8 percent of first mentions in
 1964, 45 percent in 1966 and 41 per-
 cent in 1968. This increased awareness
 was accompanied, particularly in its
 later phases, by a progressive disillusion-
 ment with the correctness of the U.S.
 commitment. Such disillusionment is
 best reflected by data published over a
 period of time by the Gallup poll [see
 illustration on next page].

Although it is clear that the public
 mood about the Vietnam war is now
 rather firmly negative, it does not follow
 that the public reaction to alternatives
 of policy can be as succinctly character-

SURVEY RESEARCH
 CENTER
 (SEPTEMBER-
 OCTOBER, 1968)

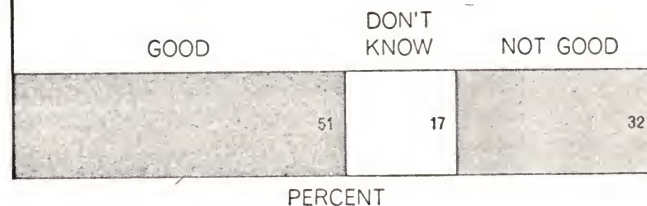


PARALLEL QUESTIONS asked at about the same time, even by separate polling agencies, should produce comparable results. In this case the Survey Research Center asked: "Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Vietnam, or should we have stayed out?" The Gallup question was: "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting do you think the U.S. made a mistake in sending troops to fight in Vietnam?"

THE GALLUP POLL
 (JULY, 1966)

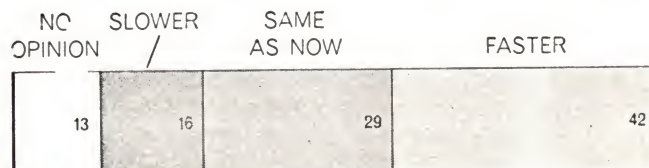


THE GALLUP POLL
 (SEPTEMBER, 1966)

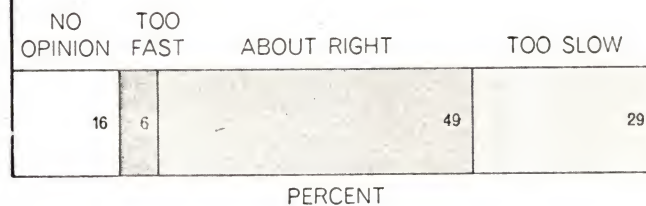


DIFFERENT QUESTIONS on the same broad issue can make it seem that many hawks have turned into doves in a short time. Gallup's question in July sought opinion on the U.S. bombing of oil storage dumps in Haiphong and Hanoi. September's question, dealing with a proposal that the U.S. submit problem of what to do about Vietnam to the United Nations and agree to accept the decision, was: "Do you think this is a good idea or not?"

THE GALLUP POLL
 (JUNE, 1969)



THE HARRIS POLL
 (SEPTEMBER-
 OCTOBER, 1969)



METHOD OF PRESENTATION of a poll question can affect the results. In this case both surveys sought opinion on the rate of troop withdrawals from Vietnam. Gallup poll offered as alternatives only "Faster" and "Slower" but interviewers accepted "Same as now" if it was volunteered. Harris poll offered all three alternatives, thereby making it easier for respondents to go along with rate of withdrawal that President Nixon had announced.

ized. In particular, the simplistic grouping of respondents as hawks and doves breaks down rapidly. Hawks are supposed to believe the U.S. did the right thing in attempting to stem the tide of Communism in Southeast Asia and that the nation should now escalate its military efforts to achieve victory. Doves are supposed to rue the fact that American troops ever became involved in Vietnam and to demand their immediate withdrawal.

Equipped with no more than these definitions, an observer would derive the clear impression from the broad trends reflected by polls that the doves now constitute a majority. Indeed, the Gallup poll showed clearly a shift of doves from a minority to a majority between 1967 and 1969 [see bottom illustration on opposite page]. From time to time the poll asked: "People are called 'hawks' if they want to step up our military effort in Vietnam. They are called 'doves' if they want to reduce our military effort in Vietnam. How would you describe yourself—as a hawk or a dove?"

Other data show that the impression given by these results is quite wide of the mark. A Survey Research Center finding in 1968 is a case in point. Respondents were asked not only if the commitment in Vietnam was a mistake but also which of three courses should

be pursued: pulling out, preserving the *status quo* or escalating. As one would expect, there was a tendency for people who thought the intervention was right to favor a stronger stand in the future and for people who deplored the intervention to favor withdrawal. Nonetheless, among those who viewed the war as a mistake almost as many favored escalation as were for withdrawal! All told, then, a five-to-three majority regretted the original intervention, but at the same time those calling for "a stronger stand even if it means invading North Vietnam" outnumbered those advocating complete withdrawal by about as large a margin.

How can the Gallup "dove" majority and the Survey Research Center results be reconciled? Some attention to the wording of the questions is rewarding. The description of "hawk" in the Gallup poll compares reasonably well with the "stronger stand" offered as an alternative by the Survey Research Center, and the proportions endorsing both positions at about the same time show no sharp discrepancy. The description of "dove," however, is more elusive. Whereas it was hardly Administration opinion in 1967, by 1969 even President Nixon was advocating a reduction of the U.S. military effort in Vietnam, thereby quali-

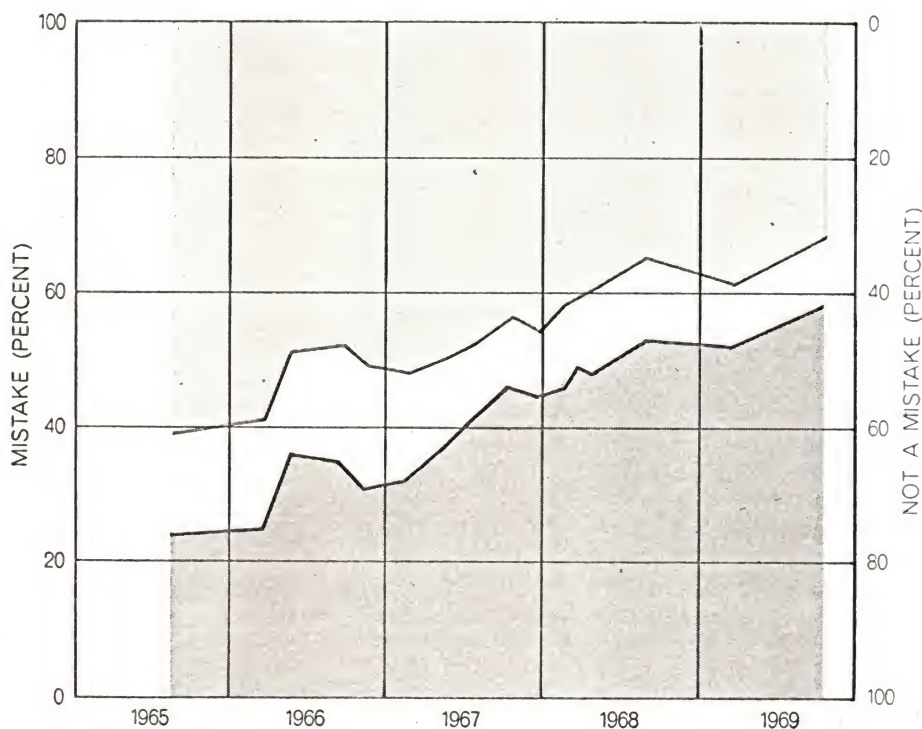
fying as a "dove" by the Gallup definitions. Nonetheless, his position was plainly different from that of the complete-withdrawal "doves" of the Survey Research Center question.

It is also illuminating to consider the trend of opinion from 1965 through 1969 on the President's handling of the Vietnam situation [see illustration on page 23]. The main trend is the sharp decline of confidence in President Johnson's management of the war. One further detail worth attention is the time lag before the decline set in. The Johnson electoral landslide in 1964 was seen in many quarters as a vote against escalating the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The bombing of North Vietnam began only three months later, touching off the first highly vocal bitterness on college campuses because it was seen as exactly the policy of escalation just repudiated. Yet the confidence of the broad public in the President's handling of the situation seemed at first to be heightened. It did not begin to turn downward until a full year later. We shall return to this point.

President Nixon appears to have gained in public approval both over his predecessor and during the period since he took office. By last July he had acquired nearly as much support as President Johnson enjoyed in 1965. The President's announcement last November 3 of his plan for a progressive reduction of the nation's military activity in Vietnam appears to have increased his support still more, although this surge now seems to have passed its peak.

Thus at the turn of the year the President stood squarely aligned with several majorities: those regretting American involvement in Vietnam, those wanting to reduce the nation's commitment there and the large majority rejecting complete withdrawal as an alternative. How stable are these majorities? In what direction might they move under various plausible conditions? Any prognoses must rest to an uncomfortable extent on surmise and are subject to reversal by unforeseen events. It is possible, however, to probe somewhat more deeply into the structure of opinion on the Vietnam war in ways that provide further insights.

Among other things, one must consider the plasticity of opinion. It is widely recognized among workers on public opinion that some measured opinions are much softer, or less crystallized, than others. Soft opinions are likely to change dramatically in response to events, even minor ones, and to the pleas of esteemed leaders.



GROWING DISENCHANTMENT with the U.S. involvement in Vietnam is reflected in five years of responses to a Gallup poll question: "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to fight in Vietnam?" Percentage calling it a mistake rose steadily (black) and percentage viewing it as not a mistake declined (color). The white area represents respondents with no opinion.

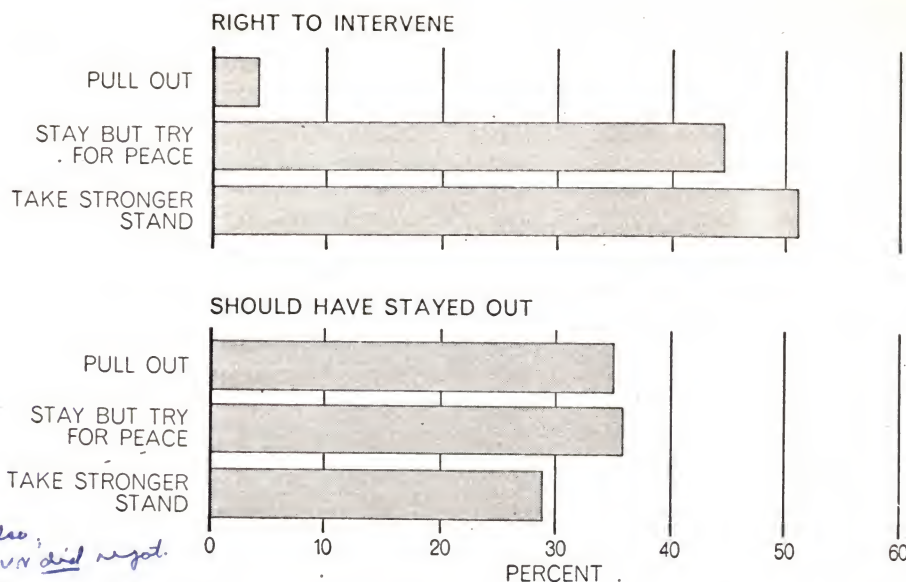
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The evolution of opinion on Vietnam provides instances of the difference between soft and hard opinion. In March, 1968, for example, the Gallup poll noted that "the North Vietnamese have said that if we agree to stop the bombing of North Vietnam, they will agree to peace negotiations" and asked: "Should we stop the bombing or not?" The result was 40 percent for stopping and 51 percent against. Shortly afterward President Johnson announced his decision to stop the bombing, and in April the Gallup poll asked respondents if they approved; 64 percent did and 26 percent did not. It is safe to assume that the shift of some 25 percent in one month was largely due to the President's speech.

On the other hand, one can consider President Johnson's repeated attempts to keep the public believing that the commitment of troops to Vietnam had been necessary. The people accepted this judgment for a while, but events gradually convinced them that the Vietnam war was a mistake. It is likely that the President's later pleas to the contrary damaged his credibility more than it swayed what had become hard opinion.

In general, it is likely that crystallized opinion differs from soft opinion in being anchored more deeply in individual experience, information and motivation. Although there was a time when most Americans lacked enough information about Vietnam to form solid judgments on the nation's involvement there, experience has mounted steeply in terms of deaths, taxes and soldiers not home for Christmas. The end state, a satisfactory disengagement from Vietnam, has come rather clearly into the public's mind. As for the means of reaching that end, opinion is much more tentative. Moreover, there is no reason to believe it will ever become sharply crystallized. To a large degree the public entrusts officials to make the detailed policy decisions, although it may ultimately punish them at the polls if the selection of means turns out to have been unfortunate.

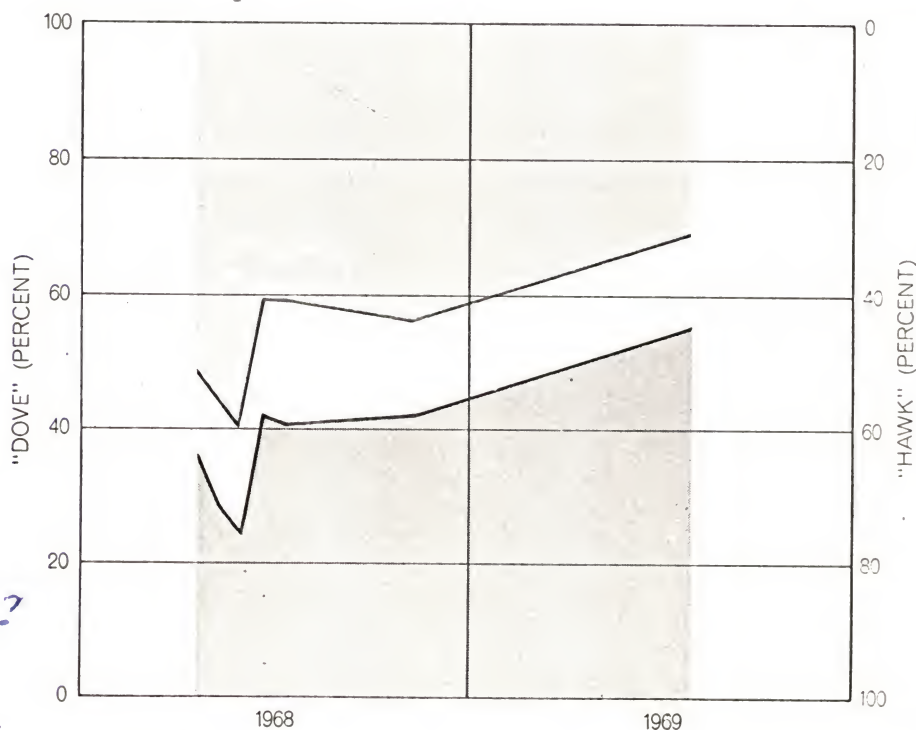
None of this is to say that all opinions favoring withdrawal or escalation are casual. Many of them are hard, and if the President succeeded in disengagement, there would surely be bitter recriminations from those whose preferences were slighted. Nor are even the deep regrets about the nation's involvement in the Vietnam war immutable. One can imagine circumstances, for instance a southward sweep by Communist China or the collapse of the Viet-



SEEMING PARADOX appeared when Survey Research Center sought opinion in 1968 on what to do in Vietnam. Respondent was asked whether U.S. was right in entering the fighting or should have stayed out; he then judged alternatives of pulling out, staying or taking a stronger stand. Supporters of original intervention tended to prefer stronger stand, but even among those regretting intervention a stronger stand was nearly as popular as pulling out. Both for regretting intervention and for taking stronger stand, margin was five to three.

cong, when such regrets would be swept away as irrelevant. The important point is that if the basic elements of the situation remain as they are, it is likely that a successful disengagement by the President would probably win the strong approval of a vast majority, regardless of the means that might have seemed more sensible along the way.

This interpretation is supported by other observations about polls. People following polls have noted how the support of the President seems to rise after any new initiative, whether it is in the direction of escalation or a reduction of commitment. It is in this light that we interpret the rise in support for President Johnson after his decision to bomb



SELF-CLASSIFICATION of respondents as "hawks" (color) and "doves" (black) on the Vietnam war was made for Gallup poll over two years. Sharp change in 1968 marks Tet offensive. Although question wording remained the same, significance of the terms shifted.

North Vietnam. The support lasted until it became clear that the projected results had been illusory. Similarly, the reaction to President Nixon's speech of last November may chiefly reflect satisfaction that some kind of effort was being made to move the situation off dead center. The entry into Cambodia seemed to be received at first with a parallel surge of public support, in spite of sharp attacks on the policy by leading spokesmen.

What if there is no successful disengagement within a reasonable period of time? If our analysis is correct, we would expect strong public disapproval to set in. It would not be surprising if such a reaction gathered speed more swiftly than the comparable moods during the Korean war and the latter days of the Johnson Administration. In this sense the provisional timetable laid out in the speech of November 3 is a short fuse on the powder keg, much like the Johnson Administration's statements about having the troops home for Christmas of 1965. There is some evidence, for example, of considerable support for a faster withdrawal of troops than present policy envisions. Moreover, although support for immediate withdrawal has not been large in the past, by early this year there were signs that it might be growing significantly. A definite timetable of a year or so for withdrawal might well be a political platform that could attract widespread support.

It is instructive, in examining the structure of public opinion on Vietnam, to look closely at the segments of the population where support for or resistance to the war is particularly strong. In 1968 the Survey Research Center asked: "How much attention have you been paying to what is going on in Vietnam? A great deal, some, or not much?" When views on the Vietnam war are divided in this way, one finds that the most attentive persons seem to show the firmest support for the war [see illustration on page 24]. This relation is most notable in the responses to an additional question on whether or not the original intervention in Vietnam was right. We are aware that self-gauged interest is not necessarily a reliable indicator of how well informed the respondent may be. Nonetheless, the results seem surprising in the light of the association between the concern and the negative feeling about the Vietnam war that has been evident on the campuses of leading universities.

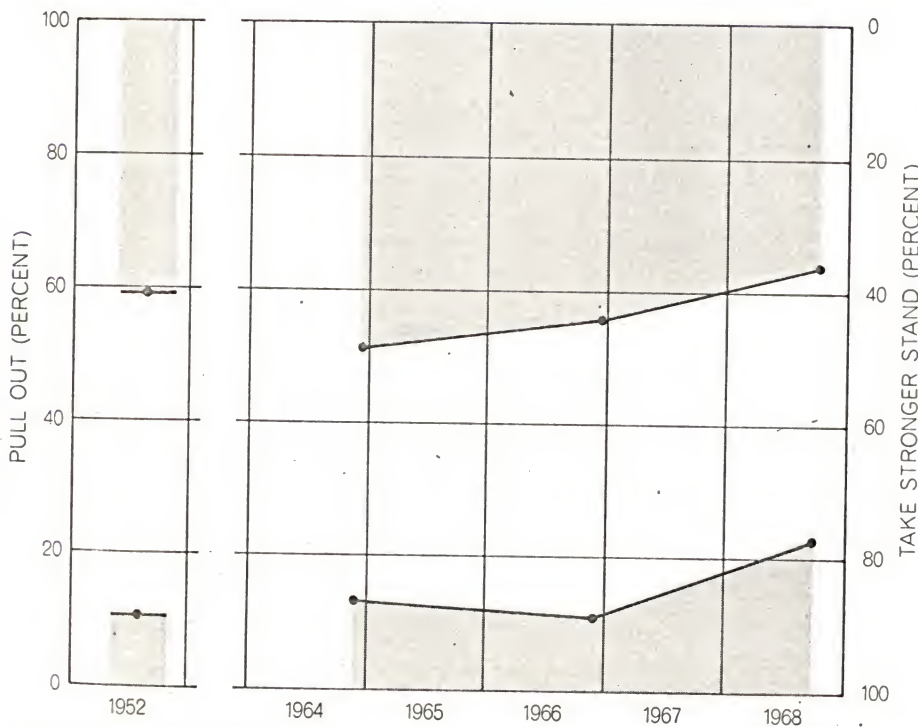
Although attitudes toward the Vietnam war have consistently shown less distinct differences among various standard groups of the population than is true of many other political attitudes, two exceptions stand out. They are race and sex. Blacks and women have shown more disenchantment with the involvement in Vietnam than white males over

the entire period when relevant samplings have been made. The patterns are not surprising. The war in Vietnam has been a notable focus of alienation in the development of black consciousness during the 1960's. Women have traditionally been unenthusiastic about war involvement, and the largest sex differences in responses emerge when policies involving strong military initiatives are at stake. Moreover, blacks and women, for different but obvious reasons, typically show less interest in political affairs than white males do. Therefore some of the association between interest and relatively hard attitudes on Vietnam probably arises from these background differences.

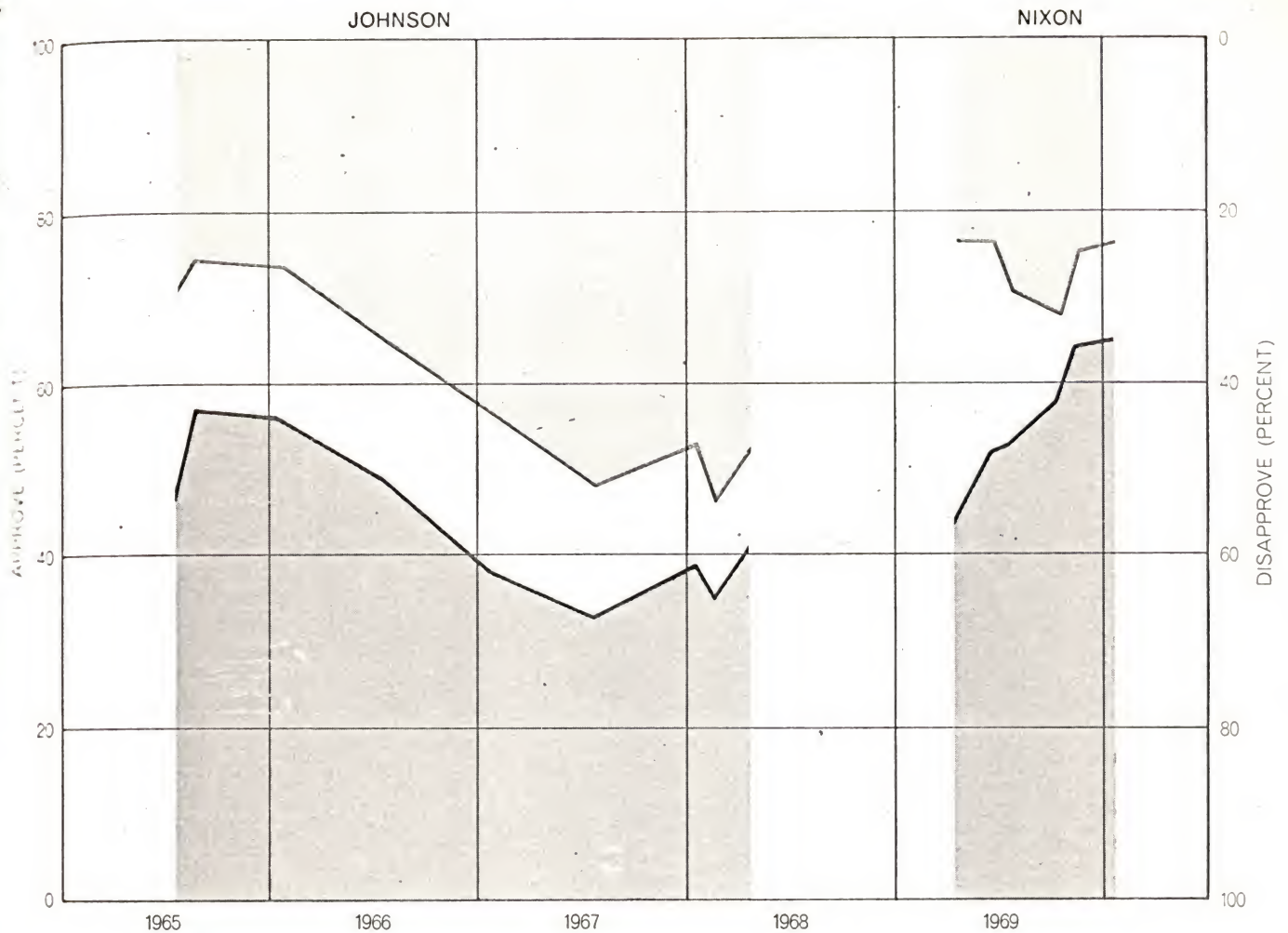
Another pattern, not quite as distinct, is a positive association between education and support for the nation's involvement in Vietnam. Respondents classed as "college-educated" register disproportionately among those who are most "hard-line," or least negative, about the Vietnam war. Here again, since there is typically a fairly strong relation between education and interest in public affairs, one sees a pattern that contributes to the association between attentiveness to the war and support for the nation's involvement.

The surprising feature of the relation between education and attitudes toward Vietnam, however, is that the pattern does not seem to be of a piece with the campus ferment against the war. Moreover, to compound the confusion, national surveys did not yield until recently any distinct relation between age and attitude toward Vietnam. The "generation gap" that one would have expected, wherein the young oppose the war and the old support it, simply failed to appear, and even now it is not very large. Indeed, putting these two findings together, it can be shown with Survey Research Center data as of 1968 that (among whites) college-educated people in their twenties were more likely than older people of grade school education both to justify the war and to favor an intensification of it. The differences are substantial, running to 20 percent or more.

We have subjected the relation between college training and support for the war to closer scrutiny, and the results are highly interesting. An obvious explanation of the seeming paradox is that most of the people who comprise the category of "college-educated" persons in poll results have been out of college for many years. Moreover, the "college-educated" group is a good deal more



ATTITUDES ON KOREA AND VIETNAM were parallel in findings made by the Survey Research Center. A small group (black) favored pulling out, a larger group (color) favored taking a stronger stand and a third group (white) favored staying but trying for peace.



SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT fluctuates considerably in data obtained by the Gallup poll. Over a period of three years in the Johnson Administration and several months of the Nixon Administration

tion poll asked respondents whether they approved or disapproved of the way the President "is handling the situation in Vietnam." Black curve shows approval; color, disapproval; white, uncertainty.

heterogeneous than one tends to think. It includes, for example, many people who attended a junior college or failed to complete the requirements for a degree at a four-year college.

It is plain that before the entry into Cambodia last month most of the vehement antiwar sentiment had appeared at a fairly small number of campuses usually classed as leading universities. Although these institutions are large and each of them awards many degrees, they are vastly outnumbered by the hundreds of smaller colleges in the nation. As a result, fewer than 25 percent of the college-educated members of the population have ever had contact with a university where the antiwar sentiment has been strong for some time, and for many of those who have had such an affiliation the connection ended long ago.

With these considerations in mind, we have grouped college-educated respondents in Survey Research Center samples according to a general quality

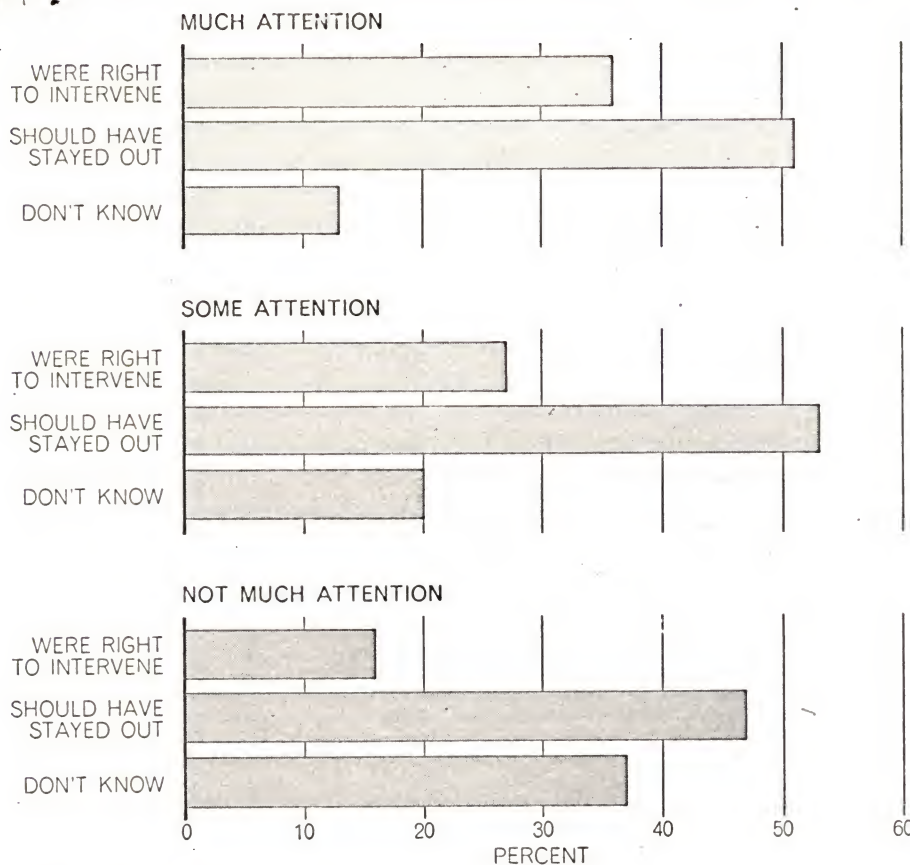
rating of the universities they attended. The rating is based on data concerning faculty salaries and on other information reflecting the academic quality of student bodies. We have also set apart as a separate group the college graduates who did postgraduate work.

Within this framework we have examined the responses to a number of questions, such as the one about whether the respondent favors a stronger stand, preservation of the *status quo* or withdrawal from Vietnam. The reader will recall that responses to this question by the total population inched in a dovish direction between 1964 and 1966 and moved more rapidly in that direction between 1966 and 1968. In each of those years the college-educated group, taken as a whole, was slightly more hawkish than the noncollege population [see illustration on page 25]. Yet even by 1964 people with graduate training were more dovish than the noncollege group had become by 1968.

More detailed analyses show that

women from the "quality" institutions were already quite negative about the war in 1964, although the males from those institutions were at the time thoroughly hawkish. By 1966, however, males with a background in the prominent universities (but without graduate training) had become more resistant than the noncollege population to a hard line in Vietnam.

Throughout the entire period from 1964 to 1968 alumni of the smaller colleges, although they came to see the war as a mistake, clung to a harder line than even the noncollege population. It is this constituency from smaller colleges more than any other that has served as the backbone of popular support for the war. Since this group is numerically the largest in the college-educated population, its views explain why national survey data show people of college background giving relatively strong support to the war. The spread of strong antiwar protest to smaller campuses in recent months, particularly in reaction to the



ATTENTION TO WAR and attitudes on intervention were compared by the Survey Research Center. Respondents were asked whether they paid much, some or little attention to developments in Vietnam and then were asked their view of original intervention by U.S.

Cambodian campaign, may be a forerunner of broader disillusionment with the war even within the more supportive segments of the public.

In any event these findings suggest rather clearly that feeling against the war has consisted up to now of two currents that are widely separated from each other. One current is made up of a tiny fraction of the population, but one that is highly educated, articulate and visible. The other group tends to be less educated than the national average and is much less politically visible, although it is far larger than the set of vocal critics—perhaps by a factor of 10 or more.

It is likely that the grounds for anti-war sentiment are quite disparate between the two currents. There is of course plain evidence of moral outrage in the more highly educated and articulate group. The polls have made little effort to illuminate the bases of negativism in the broader public, but signs of any moral overtones to this larger discontent are few. General reaction to the reports of the massacre at My Lai, as recorded in a Harris poll in January, can perhaps best be described as bland. Most disenchantment with the war seems pragmatic and can be summed up

in the attitude that "we have not won and have little prospect of doing so."

This simple war-weariness has colored poll results for some time. One of the most negative responses to any policy proposal for the Vietnam war appeared when the Gallup poll asked in 1967 about a "suggestion" that "income taxes be raised to help pay for the war in Vietnam": 70 percent of the respondents were opposed. Almost any proposal to share or somehow unload the burden of the war wins strong approval. We have mentioned the positive response to the idea of submitting the issue to the UN. In view of the President's policy of "Vietnamization" it is interesting to note that as early as 1966 the Gallup poll showed 62 percent favoring the transfer of "more responsibility for the fighting of the war" to South Vietnam, with 22 percent opposed and the remainder uncertain. A year later the edge had risen to 77 to 11.

The failure of most commentators to recognize the profound differences between the two currents of opposition to the war may have led to much of the perplexity over the behavior of public opinion. People who oppose the war for moral reasons are little affected by new

events that suggest victory or defeat whereas those who oppose the war for pragmatic reasons are greatly influenced by just such events.

Are they? Are the opinions based on facts?
There is much reason to believe the two groups have little communication with each other. The smaller group is the vanguard of protest against the war and many of its members are among the militant protesters. The larger group, although it also regrets the war, shares at the same time the antipathy that most Americans have to any political dissent that goes beyond the confines of conventional debate. It is therefore not surprising that when the Survey Research Center asked respondents in 1968 to evaluate a wide range of political leaders and groups on a "feeling" scale, ranging from extremely negative to highly positive, reactions toward "Vietnam war protesters" were by a substantial amount the most negative in the set. Nearly 75 percent of the respondents rated protesters in the negative half of the scale and more than 33 percent placed them at the extreme negative point, which was not otherwise much employed. Indeed, 63 percent of those believing the war was a mistake viewed protesters negatively, and even of the group favoring complete withdrawal from Vietnam, 53 percent put the protesters on the negative side of the scale. Plainly opposition to the war and opposition to active protest against it go together for a significant part of the population.

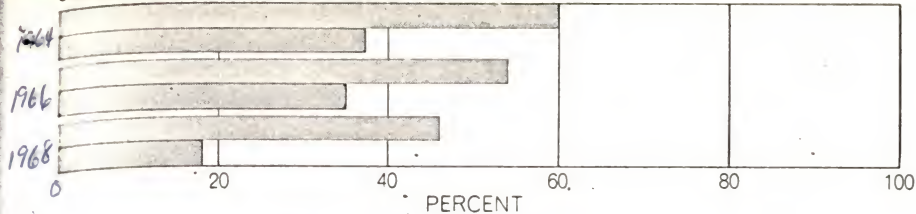
These findings help to fill in a profile of public opinion on the war in Vietnam. They also lend credence to the proposition that the net effect of vigorous protest in the streets has been to shift mass opinion toward renewed support of the President. On the other hand, the role of highly visible dissent in keeping a wider range of options in the public eye and in encouraging dovish spokesmen in Congress or skeptical commentators in the mass media could be quite real.

(Hyp: Dedicated action more visible to elites... What if: threat of class?)

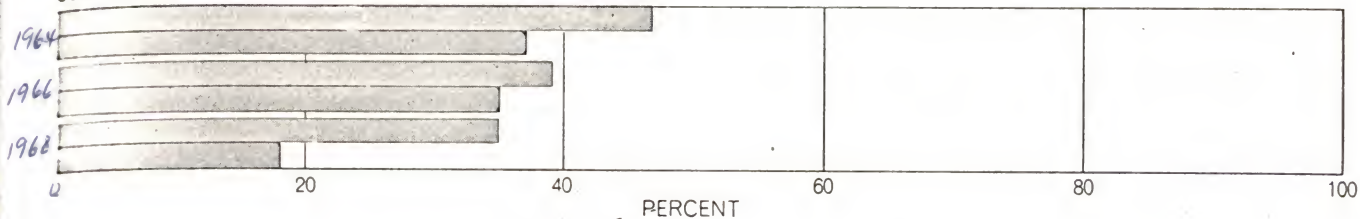
COLLEGE EDUCATION and attitudes toward Vietnam are compared in the chart on the opposite page, which uses a rating of colleges made by the Survey Research Center on a sliding scale that begins at 1 with the universities that pay the highest faculty salaries and have student bodies of high academic quality. Large bars encompassing each group of smaller bars reflect percentage of the U.S. adult population that attended each type of college. Gray bars show opinion of the noncollege population

*Hand-hats/peers are raising hands—so representative as Harvard students! * Silent doves (a majority) (older, black, women, poor, uneducated...)*

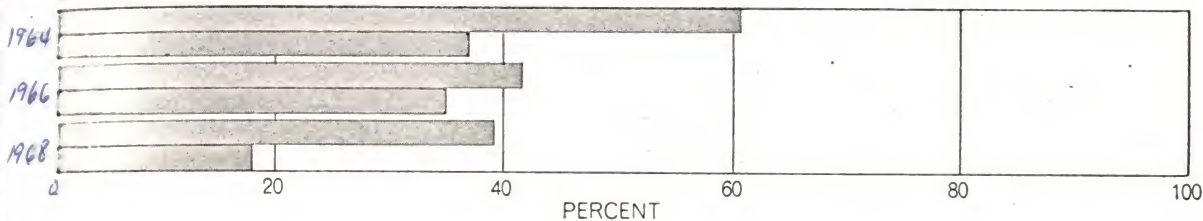
SMALL SCHOOLS (14.9 PERCENT)



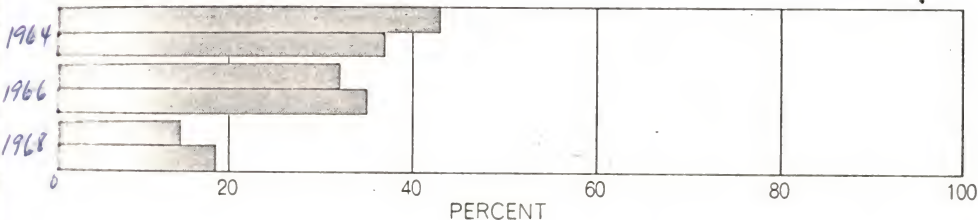
CLASS E (22.8 PERCENT)



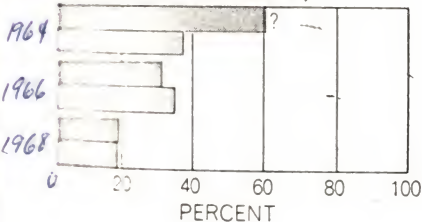
UNRATED (20.8 PERCENT)



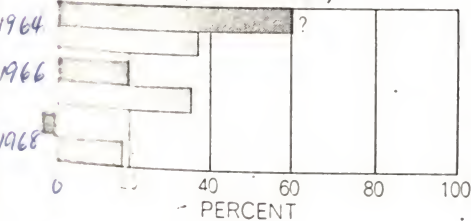
CLASS D (16.1 PERCENT)



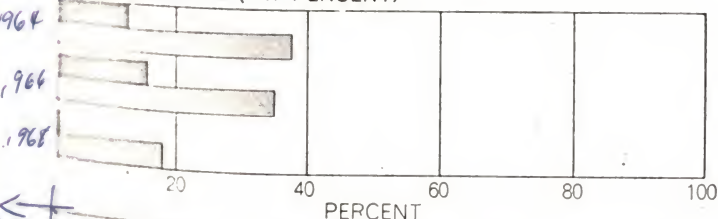
CLASS C (6.4 PERCENT)



CLASS A-B (7.3 PERCENT)



POSTGRADUATE (11.7 PERCENT)



PULL OUT TAKE STRONGER STAND